

**{As Prepared for Delivery}**

**Earth Day 2006  
Tuscarawas County, Ohio Wastewater Announcement  
Thomas C. Dorr, Under Secretary for Rural Development  
April 21, 2006  
Remarks**

**Good morning/afternoon.**

**It is a pleasure to be here and -- on behalf of President Bush, Secretary Johanns, and a great team at USDA Rural Development -- to join you in celebrating the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day.**

**Thirty-six years ago, America embraced a new environmental ethic.**

**1970 is already ancient history for some of the younger folks here, but it was just yesterday for those of us of a certain age. It was in 1970 that President Nixon proposed the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency.**

**The first Earth Day was celebrated the same year.**

**That coincidence of timing was no accident. Very clearly, a new national consensus had emerged. 36 years later, it still holds firm.**

**We have come a long way in the intervening years -- but there is more yet to do. So today, we have two purposes:**

- First, to recognize the hard work of many thousands of people in all walks of life who have helped create a cleaner world;**
- And secondly, to renew our own commitment to cleaner air, fishable and swimmable streams, and a healthier environment for all Americans.**

**That's a commitment we take seriously, one community, one business, one project at a time. As President Bush has put it on many occasions, we are called upon to be good stewards -- and if we take that call seriously ...**  
**... then, Every day is Earth Day – for every farmer.**

**It's important though to acknowledge that America's progress since that first Earth Day is significant. This effort *does* make a difference.**

**“In 1972, only 36 percent of the nation's assessed stream miles were safe for uses such as fishing and swimming: today, about 60 percent are safe for such uses.”**

**Even more dramatically, since 1970 America's population has increased 40%. Energy consumption has increased 47%. Vehicle miles traveled are up 171% and Gross Domestic Product is up 187%.**

**In short, we are a much bigger, more energy intensive, and significantly wealthier country than we were in 1970. Yet at the same time, total emissions of the six primary pollutants\* targeted by the Clean Air Act are DOWN 54%.**

**That is an astonishing achievement. We've grown the economy and grown the country while dramatically reducing pollution.**

**That progress continues in many ways, large and small. One of those is sitting [outside/over there] – it's that sharp looking Jeep Liberty I came in. It's biodiesel, and I'd like to thank the Ohio Soybean Association for**

making it available. I hope you'll all have a chance to go over and check it out after we finish with the speeches.

Biodiesel is new, but it's already a success story, particularly for the environment, where it's a winner across the board: on emissions, on health effects, on net energy balance, on reducing greenhouse gasses -- you name it.

Biodiesel production in the United States rose from 5 million gallons in 2000 to 25 million gallons in 2004 to 75 million gallons last year. You heard that right -- it tripled in just one year. The growth rate is incredible.

And biodiesel isn't alone. Ethanol production is booming. Wind energy is taking off. The economics of solar power are still not fully competitive, but we *are* seeing more and more interest in solar in remote applications. There is an environmental and energy commitment - and ethic - of this President.

USDA Rural Development invests in all these areas. Since 2001 we've invested over \$350 million in green energy. Renewable energy is a major

**growth opportunity for rural America – and it's good for the economy and the environment as well. It is good for rural America.**

**We have indeed come a long way since 1970. But we have even more to do, whether it's green energy or clean water or better waste treatment. That's why we are here today.**

**So, it is a privilege for me, on behalf of President Bush and Secretary Johanns, to announce a USDA Rural Development funding package totaling \$3.2 million to finance a new wastewater system for the Village of Stone Creek.**

**This investment will provide 93 households with modern wastewater treatment. To city folks, 93 households may sound small ... but that's only if you don't live here.**

**If you turn the telescope around and get Stone Creek – along with hundreds of other rural communities -- into focus, you get a more realistic view of the scope of this effort.**

**In Ohio alone, since 2001, USDA Rural Development, under the leadership of Randy Hunt and his colleagues, has invested over \$343 million for water and wastewater systems in 300 rural communities. That's in addition to this project today.**

**In the same time period, across the country we have invested nearly \$8.4 billion in over 11,900 rural communities ... Just for water and wastewater ... for communities just like Stone Creek.**

**This year for Earth Day we are announcing another 43 water and wastewater projects totaling over \$94.3 million.**

**But again, I want to emphasize that this isn't just an Earth Day "thing" – it goes on year-round ... as do our efforts to promote renewable energy and energy conservation ... because every day is indeed Earth Day.**

**Thank you.**